DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 081 454 LI 004 462

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Katz, Ruth M.; Finks, Lee W. |
| TITLE | Survey to Determine the Attitudes of Consumers of Library Research. Analysis of the Data. |
| INSTITUTION | American Library Association, Chicago, Ill. Library Research Round Table.; ERIC Clearinghouse on Library and Information Sciences, Washington, D.C. |
| SPONS AGENCY | National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. |
| PUB DATE | Jun 72 |
| NOTE | 35p.; (1 reference); An oral summary of this paper was presented as a part of the Library Research Round Table program of the June 25 to July 1, 1972 Annual Conference of the American Library Association |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29 |
| DESCRIPTORS | Librarians; *Library Research; Library Science; Library Surveys; Questionnaires; Research; *Research Needs; *Research Utilization; Scholarly Journals; Surveys |

ABSTRACT

This survey of consumers of research was conducted in support of the question, "Is there a need for a journal of library research?" As a supporting document it may provide the background against which individuals or groups may, for their own purpose, begin to formulate an answer to the question. Thus the scope of the study is to collect and describe information about the opinions, attitudes and practices of librarians presumed to be interested in research. Decisions in two basic areas were the first steps in the design process. One decision point was specification of the population from which the sample would be drawn (i.e., who are the likely consumer?). Two target populations were selected. One was the membership of the Library Research Round Table (LRRT) which was thought to be a self-selected group of persons interested in research. The other was the membership of the American Library Association (ALA) Library Education Division (LED). A second decision point was clarification of what was meant by the term needs. The authors collected data that described the interests or primary activities of the sample and then used the data to arrive at implied needs. Additionally, it was decided that the survey data should provide insight as to feasibility of a journal of library research, rather than the need for such a journal. (Related documents are LI 004 460 and 004 461.)
(Author/SJ)

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ED 081454

# SURVEY TO DETERMINE THE ATTITUDES OF CONSUMERS OF LIBRARY RESEARCH

## Analysis of the Data

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*This publication was prepared pursuant to a contract with the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official National Institute of Education position or policy.*

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

For the fringe benefits that gave this project the trappings of organizational respectability, we express our appreciation to Phillip Clark, Executive Director of the Bureau of Information Sciences Research in the Graduate School of Library Service at Rutgers University.

## I. Background for the Study

The survey described in this report is one of three papers originally prepared for presentation during the June 1972 convention of the American Library Association. The idea for a program on research came from the convention planning committee of the ALA Library Research Round Table (LRRT). Members of this committee were Barbara Slanker, Ernest R. DeProspo and J. I. Smith. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Library and Information Sciences cooperated with LRRT in providing bibliographic and financial support for the papers.

Work on the survey project began in January 1972 when a preliminary design scheme and budget were presented to the LRRT planning committee during the ALA mid-winter meetings. Up to this point, communication between the investigators was entirely by mail and telephone. In early February, the investigators met for 3 days in New Brunswick to finalize the design of the questionnaire and the sampling procedures, to schedule the remaining tasks and to make preliminary decisions about the scope and nature of the data analysis. Since the project budget could not support additional travel, all further communication and coordination was by mail and phone. Written progress reports were used to keep LRRT and ERIC personnel informed.

The philosophical background for the project reflects influence from two sources. One is Ernest DeProspo whose ideas about how best to bring research to bear on problems in librarianship are much in evidence at the Rutgers Library School. The other influential source is the Pelz

and Andrews study "Scientists in Organizations. Productive Climates for Research and Development" (1). One should not be misled by the fact that the researchers studied by Pelz and Andrews were physical scientists working in the laboratory environment. More important is that the authors were social/behavioral scientists on the staff of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, that the data were collected and cumulated over a period of nearly 15 years and that many of the relationships studied (professionals in their work/organizational environment) are those for which similar data for non-laboratory settings might well be put to good use.

Finally, the present survey is a logical product of the research interests and professional leanings of the investigators. As such, it can hardly be called a "final" report.

(1) Pelz, Donald C. and Frank M. Andrews. Scientists in organizations. Productive climates for Research and Development. New York, Wiley, 1966.

## II. Survey Scope and Design

This survey of consumers of research was conducted in support of the question, "Is there a need for a journla of library research?" As a supporting document it may provide the background against which individuals or groups may, for their own purposes, begin to formulate an answer to the question. Thus the scope of the study is a modest one--to collect and describe information about the opinions, attitudes and practices of librarians presumed to be interested in research.

Decisions in two basic areas were the first steps in the design process. One decision point was specification of the population from which the sample would be drawn (i.e., who are the likely consumers?) Two target populations were eventually selected. One was the membership of the Library Research Round Table which was thought to be a self-selected group of persons interested in research. The other was the membership of ALA's Library Education Division; it seemed reasonable to think of this group as interested in or expected to be interested in research. These target populations do not, of course, represent the absolute population of persons having an interest in library research. They do, however, provide a base from which a sample of manageable size appropriate to the constraints of the study can be drawn.

A second decision point was clarfication of what was meant by the term "needs". Needs can be seen as knows existing needs or as potential needs. An individual's concept of need is usually based on a model of what is thought to be possible or available at some point in time. For the present study it was thought to be unproductive to ask for speculation about need

for a journal that is unavailable and perhaps, in the eyes of many, not likely to be available. It seemed more fruitful to collect data that would describe the interests or primary activities of the sample and then to use the data to arrive at implied needs. A research journal which satisfied these needs might then be designed. Such a journal would presumably be evolutionary--responding to and encouraging the growth and sophistication of library research.

In summary, design decisions include: definition of interest in library research as membership in LRRT and/or LED; that needs not be solicited directly but be implied from the data; and that the survey data should provide insight as to feasibility of a journal of library research rather than the "need" for such a journal.

A. Sample

The sample consisted of 387 apparent personal members of LED and LRRT. These were randomly selected from membership lists provided by ALA headquarters. The phrase "apparent personal members" is used to include individuals who gave what appeared to be a home address as well as those who gave in institutional address. Persons selected in the sample were representative of 46 states, Washington, D.C. and Canada. In the sample, a total of 105 persons held membership in both LED and LRRT.

B. Survey Instrument

Data collection was by questionnaire. The 19 numbered questions were constructed to collect personal data, attitudes toward research, opinions about research in librarianship and other fields, and to gain insight into how an interest in research is pursued. Some of the questions were

open-end; responses to these questions were not merely added up but were interpreted often by grouping or in support of a structured question. The survey instrument with its cover letter is reproduced as Appendix A.

Questionnnaires were mailed to the 387 persons in the survey sample on March 17, 1972. Each questionnaire was numbered on the last (blank) page. This was done for several reasons: so that follow-up letters would be sent only to non-respondents, to help eliminate duplicate amilings, and to aid in the development of samples for extensions of this research. That is, in a further study the investigators may want to re-use some of the original sample or to specifically avoid using any of the original sample. With this in mind, one master list of names and their associated numbers was kept at the check-in point. Coding and Keypunching utilized student assistance.

Thus the confidential nature of individual responses was maintained.

Follow-up letters to non-respondents were mailed on April 6, 1972. A copy of this form also appears in Appendix A.

The questionnaire was designed so that it could be completed in about 20 minutes. Most respondents who estimated time spent confirmed that this design goal was achieved.

C. Design Problems

Data from the questionnaires were coded and punched on to cards and, via a remote terminal at the Rutgers Library School, these were then processed at the Center for Computation and Information Services at Rutgers University.

Tabulations and computations were done with the use of a pre-packaged set of computer programs called SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The package was developed at Stanford University to serve the specific needs of social scientists. It enables users, guided by the SPSS manual, to direct simple requests to the computer in a language that is virtually plain English and to receive tabulations and appropriate statistical tests, even graphic representations, in output that is clearly labeled and easy to read and interpret.

## III. Presentation of Collected Data*

This section gives a profile of 152 respondents (a response rate of 39%) and displays the data as it was collected. The non-tabular data resulting from question 9 and from the open-end questions will be presented in section V.

### A. Profile of Respondents--Questions 10, 11, 12, 13 and data from the sampling procedure

| | % respondents |
|---|---|
| Members of LED | 32% |
| Members of LRRT | 32 |
| Members of LED and LRRT | 36 |
| Male | 45 |
| Female | 54 |
| No data (initials & surname only) | 1 |
| Age is under 30 | 5 |
| 30 to 34 | 11 |
| 35 to 39 | 15 |
| 40 to 44 | 16 |
| 45 to 49 | 14 |
| 50 and over | 38 |
| no response | 1 |

*For data given throughout this report, results are rounded off to the nearest whole percent. In some displays, data do not total 100% due mainly to instances when not all respondents answered a particular question or when more than one response per respondent was possible. Also, for the exact wording of questions used in the survey instrument, refer to appendix A.

| | | % respondents |
|---|---|---|
| Highest degree held is | BA | 3 |
| | BSLS | 5 |
| | MA | 6 |
| | MLS | 41 |
| | MA & MLS | 21 |
| | DLS, EdD | 2 |
| | PhD | 21 |
| | No response | 1 |
| Place of employment is | college or university | 59 |
| | jr. college | 4 |
| | Elem or sec school | 8 |
| | public library | 4 |
| | Federal agency/dept | 6 |
| | Regional lib or system | 2 |
| | State agency/dept | 5 |
| | Professional assoc | 3 |
| | Industry | 5 |
| | Other | 4 |
| Spend 50% or more of time in | general lib work | 11 |
| | admin or mgmnt | 33 |
| | teaching | 28 |
| | research | 11 |
| | consulting/advising | 4 |
| | other | 1 |

B. Opinions about Research Questions 1, 2, 3, 4

These questions asked respondents to give them opinions of research in the traditional sciences, social and behavioral sciences, and in librarianship. Respondents were also asked to estimate their knowledge of research in each of the above fields

| | % respondents | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | high regard | mixed feelings | low regard |
| opinion research in traditional sci | 70 | 28 | 0 |
| research soc & behav sci | 22 | 72 | 4 |
| research in librarianship | 9 | 55 | 35 |

| | % respondents | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | above average | average | below average |
| knowledge of research in tradit sci | 20 | 49 | 30 |
| research soc & behav sci | 28 | 65 | 6 |
| research in librarianship | 73 | 22 | 3 |

C. How Research Interest is Pursued--Questions 5, 6, 8, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

question 5--asked which 5 scholarly or professional journals or current-awareness services would you request if your employer or institution would pay for personal subscriptions.

In response to question 5, a total of 187 different titles were mentioned by respondents. Of these, 79 titles were mentioned 2 or more times and 24 titles were mentioned 5 or more times. These 24 titles are:

American Libraries (mentioned 22 times)
Audiovisual Instruction (5)
AV Communication Review (7)
College and Research Libraries (38)
Current Contents-Behavioral Sciences (9)
ERIC (6) (note no further explanation of what respondents meant)
Journal of the American Society for Information Sciences(31)
Journal of Documentation (16)
Journal of Education for Librarianship(18)
Journal of Library Automation (17)
Library and Information Science Abstracts (12)
Library Journal (33)
Library Literature (8)
Library Trends (56)
Library Quarterly (59)
Library Resources and Technical Services (25)
Psychological Abstracts(5)
Research in Education (8)
RQ (8)
School Libraries (5)
Science (6)
Special Libraries (10)
Wilson Library Bulletin (13)

question 6--asked how did you learn about the publications cited above? Responses were as follows and represent the total response not just those received in reference to the 24 most frequently mentioned titles.

| | % respondents |
|---|---|
| Am current subscriber, pay for own subscription | 58% |
| read library or colleague's copy | 63 |
| saw ads or announcements that provoked interest | 14 |
| have always known of these, couldn't afford more subscriptions or memberships | 35 |

question 8--research-related activities
respondents were asked--in which of the following research-related activities are you currently engaged?

| | % respondents | |
|---|---|---|
| | involvement | major involvement |
| conducting research | 38% | 15% |
| directing research of others | 26 | 7 |
| sponsoring or funding research | 4 | 1 |
| evaluating research proposals | 24 | 2 |
| reading the results of research | 56 | 15 |
| writing research proposals, project repts | 38 | 3 |
| teaching research methods | 17 | 5 |
| assisting with the research of others | 19 | 6 |

question 14--membership in national professional organizations

Responses received for organizations other than those printed on the questionnaire were greatest for:

AAUP 22% of the respondents
AALS 13%
AAAS 5%

A total of 61 other professional organizations were mentioned by respondents; 12 of these were listed 3 or more times. These were:

American Association of University Women
Adult Education Association
National Council of Teachers of English
Beta Phi Mu

Medical Library Association
Canadian Library Association
Bibliographic Society of America
Phi Delta Kappa
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Catholic Library Association
International Reading Association
American Society of Indexers

question 15--within the past 2 years, which of the following have you attended?

| | % respondents |
|---|---|
| meeting of national professional organization | 82% |
| colloquium, workshop-own institution | 55 |
| colloquium, workshop-outside institution | 70 |
| thesis, dissertation committee meeting | 29 |
| invited conference | 55 |
| local, state or regional meeting | 90 |
| international meeting | 11 |

question 16--within past 2 years, which of the following research-related reports have you written?

| | |
|---|---|
| in-house publication or bulletin | 53% |
| proceedings or symposium publication | 11 |
| copy of an oral presentation | 34 |
| journal article | 46 |
| thesis or dissertation | 10 |
| proposal or report to contracting agency | 35 |
| progress or final report of consulting job | 34 |

question 17--experiences that have been principal influence on attitude toward research in librarianship

| | |
|---|---|
| exposure during pre-graduate school years | 7% |
| graduate work at MLS level | 15 |
| doctoral work in librarianship | 18 |
| other graduate work | 7 |
| contact with colleagues | 15 |
| reading with literature in librarianship | 20 |
| reading in other fields | 5 |
| conferences, workshops, meetings, etc. | 3 |

question 18--major obstacles preventing increased participation in and concern with library research

| | |
|---|---|
| insufficient time to locate, read materials | 60% |
| absence of info of types sought | 22 |
| poor quality of available info | 18 |
| keeping up with current work outside own area | 32 |
| inadequate background | 17 |
| lack of support from own institution | 23 |
| lack of personal interest | 3 |
| other | 13 |

Among the respondents who noted a lack of support from their own institutions, many cited evidence of the non-support. For example: heavy teaching load, no clerical or other support staff, too many administrative demands, lack of funding, too many additional duties, no other person interested in research, immediate superior not interested in research. One respondent noted that most prospective employees had no commitment to research.

IV. Cross-Tabulations of the Data

This section presents an analysis of the data according to the membership group of the respondents. Three membership groups are defined: respondents belonging to LED only; respondents belonging to LRRT only; and respondents belonging to both LED and LRRT. Respondents did, of course, belong to other professional units but the basis for their inclusion in this study was membership in LED and/or LRRT. The order of presentation is similar to that in Section III.

A. Profile of Respondents

| | | Respondents Belonging to | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | LED only | LRRT only | Both |
| | | 49 | 48 | 55 |
| | % Male | 27% | 51% | 58% |
| | % Female | 73 | 49 | 42 |
| % Respondents age | 29 or below | 2% | 10% | 4% |
| | 30-34 | 8 | 15 | 9 |
| | 35-39 | 10 | 19 | 16 |
| | 40-44 | 16 | 10 | 22 |
| | 45-49 | 16 | 6 | 18 |
| | 50 or more | 45 | 40 | 31 |
| | No response | 3 | -- | -- |
| % Respondents highest degree is | | | | |
| | BA and BSLS | 2% | 8% | 4% |
| | MA | 10 | 4 | 4 |
| | MLS | 47 | 40 | 38 |
| | MA and MLS | 18 | 33 | 13 |
| | DLS, EdD, Phd | 18 | 6 | 42 |
| Age when highest degree receives | | 41% | 49% | 52% |
| % holders of MLS or MA & MLS | 29 or below | 25 | 37 | 37 |
| | 30 - 39 | 34 | 14 | 11 |
| | 40 or more | | | |
| holders of DLS, EdD, or Phd | %29 or below | 12% | -- | 22% |
| | 30 - 39 | 44 | 67 | 43 |
| | 40 or more | 44 | 33 | 35 |

| | Among Respondents Belonging | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | LED only | LRRT only | Both |
| Place of employment is | | | |
| college or university | 67% | 38% | 71% |
| junior college | 4 | 8 | -- |
| elem or sec school | 6 | 13 | 6 |
| public library | 2 | 8 | 2 |
| regional library system | -- | -- | 6 |
| federal agency/dept. | 4 | 13 | 2 |
| state agency/dept. | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| professional assoc. | 2 | 6 | -- |
| industry | 2 | 4 | 7 |
| other | 2 | 8 | 2 |
| no response | 2 | -- | 2 |
| % spending 50% or more time in | | | |
| general library work | 12% | 19% | 4% |
| admin. or mgmnt | 20 | 40 | 36 |
| teaching | 43 | 2 | 37 |
| research | 2 | 19 | 11 |
| consulting advising | 6 | -- | 5 |
| B. Opinions About Research | | | |
| % having high regard for: | | | |
| traditional sci research | 69% | 77% | 65% |
| soc & behav sci research | 18 | 27 | 22 |
| research in librarianship | 10 | 8 | 7 |
| % estimating above average knowledge of: | | | |
| traditional sci research | 14% | 19% | 26% |
| soc behav sci research | 25 | 31 | 27 |
| research in librarianship | 63 | 67 | 87 |
| % respondents indicating major involvement in: | | | |
| conducting research | 6% | 19% | 18% |
| directing research of other | 6 | 6 | 9 |
| sponsoring or funding research | 2 | -- | -- |
| evaluating research proposals | 2 | 4 | -- |
| reading the results of research | 14 | 15 | 15 |
| writing research proposals, project reports | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| teaching research methods | -- | 4 | 11 |
| assesting with the research of others | 4 | 8 | 6 |

| | Among Respondents Belonging to | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | LED only | LRRT only | Both |
| % respondents holding membership in professional organizations other than ALA | | | |
| SLA | 14% | 17% | 33% |
| ASIS | 6 | 31 | 38 |
| NEA | 25 | 13 | 13 |
| AECT | 18 | 6 | 13 |
| AALS | 18 | 2 | 15 |
| AAUP | 14 | 15 | 35 |
| AAAS | 4 | 2 | 9 |
| % respondents who, within past 2 years | | | |
| attended meeting natl prof org | 78% | 79% | 87% |
| colloquium, workshop-own institution | 47 | 50 | 67 |
| colloquium, workshop-outside institution | 63 | 71 | 75 |
| thesis, dissertation committee meeting | 22 | 17 | 46 |
| invited conference | 59 | 40 | 64 |
| local, state, or regional meeting | 90 | 83 | 96 |
| international meeting | 16 | 6 | 11 |
| Wrote: a journal article | 39 | 44 | 55 |
| thesis, dissertation | 8 | 15 | 7 |
| proposal or report to contracting agency | 29 | 29 | 46 |
| progress or final report of consulting job | 33 | 25 | 42 |
| % respondents indicating principal influence on attitude toward research in librarianship is: | | | |
| exposure during pre-grade school years | 8% | 13% | 2% |
| graduate work at MLS level | 18 | 19 | 7 |
| doctoral work in librarianship | 12 | 8 | 31 |
| other graduate work | 4 | 4 | 11 |
| contact with colleagues | 20 | 6 | 18 |
| reading the literature in librarianship | 22 | 31 | 9 |
| reading in other fields | 4 | 8 | 4 |
| conferences, workshops, etc. | -- | -- | 9 |
| % respondents reporting major obstacles to increased participation in and concern with library research | | | |
| insufficient time to locate, read materials | 31% | 56% | 35% |
| absence of info of types sought | 27 | 21 | 18 |
| poor quality of available info | 16 | 21 | 18 |
| keeping up with current work outside own area | 29 | 33 | 33 |
| inadequate background | 14 | 27 | 13 |
| lack of support from own institution | 16 | 23 | 29 |
| lack of personal interest | 6 | 2 | 6 |
| other | 14 | 17 | 9 |

V. Presentation of Non-Tabulated Data and Open-ended Questions

Included in this section are discussion of two open-ended questions; one that asked respondents to list areas of specialization and one that asked respondents to describe elements considered essential to a definition of research. The last topic in this section is the presentation of the results from question 9--reactions to a group of statements about research.

A. question 7--respondents were asked to list areas of specialization, i.e. content areas in which they considered themselves to be proficient.

Most respondents listed one, two or three areas of specialization; 9% said they had not area of specialization. All the areas in which respondents rated themselves as "most proficient" are listed in Appendix B exactly as these were given on the questionnaire. In trying to group these specialities in some way, the following categories seemed evident.

by discipline--e.g. education, political science, humanities
by type of library--e.g. academic libraries, public libraries
by service group--e.g. underprivileged, adults
by library specialty--e.g. rare books, technical services, bibliography
by literature specialty--e.g. sci-tech, children

Other categories may occur to the reader but it does not seem wise to try to force the responses into too many piles just to be neat.

Two uses for the data from question 7 do come to mind. First, the data may bear a message for the individual or group wishing to publish a journal of library research. Secondly, the language or phrasing used by respondents tell us something about how these professionals perceive their field, and presumably, how they might frame literature questions, respond to journal titles, etc. For example, based on this data, JEL may reappear as Journal of Library Education--the wording apparently preferred by respondents.

B. question 19--respondents were asked to keep in mind their personal conception of research and then to list elements they considered essential to a definition of research.

The summary of responses given below is the product of an improvised content analysis or, more accurately, consensus analysis. It reflects the ideas or elements most frequently mentioned by respondents as being important to any definition of research. The words and phrases used below are, with the exception of those enclosed in parens, taken directly from the responses. Many respondents replied to question 19 with especially detailed and thoughtful statements. Portions of these are extracted and appear in Appendix B.

problem definition

- focus on one thing at a time
- identify previous relevant work
- asking the right questions
- hypotheses
- define terms clearly

critical evaluation of data

- interpretation and judgment

lucid reporting

- clarity
- organization of information for maximum results and application

methodology

- statistical analysis but not exclusively
- experimental controls
- pattern after scientific method
- replicability of findings
- don't copy physical science

avoid duplication

systematic

(qualities of the investigator)

creativity, curiosity, imagination

sound training in bibliography

self-discipline, motivation

full-time

scholarly attitude

unbiased, impartial

(boals of research)

attempts to arrive at generalizable relationships

enhance applications and usefulness

critical, exhaustive and discusses new facts which have practical application

either theoretical or practical

purposeful collection of empirical data

careful, logical generalization

uncover patterns in mass of data confronting us daily

problem-solving, not just rigorous inquiry - in librarianship need to build base of research into practice

C question 9

One question, number nine, was an eight-item Likert-type attitude scale measuring attitude toward research (Footnote: this scale is a condensed form of a twenty-item scale developed by Lee W. Finks as part of an unpublished doctoral dissertation. The larger scale has been demonstrated to have reliability and validity and this subscale has shown some evidence of reliability and validity as well.) It was hoped that through this question some insights might be gained into how favorable attitudes toward research are formed and whether they relate to people's choices of organizations, etc., to any degree. Although the differences are not very great, as might be predicted with a sample drawn from LRRT and LED members, some patterns are evident.

The strongest relationships were not surprising and might well have been predicted. These are (1) between attitude toward research and amount of time involved in research and (2) between favorable attitude toward research and work at the Ph.D. level. For example, there was a significant correlation ($r=.244$, $n=150$, sig. at .001) between percentage of time directed toward research (question 13) and attitude toward research. As well, in question 8, those who indicated major involvement in conducting research or in writing research proposals and reports had a noticeably higher attitude score than did those in other categories.

As for work at the Ph.D. level, we found in question 11 that those who hold the Ph.D. had a noticeably higher attitude score than did any others. Interestingly, the lowest attitude score of this group was that of the holders of the DLS, although the number was quite small. Once again, in question 16 which dealt with what the respondents had written within the past two years, those who checked thesis or dissertation had a noticeably higher attitude score than any other category

We can probably infer from this that graduate work at the Ph.D. level is the principal developer of positive attitudes toward research. When we look at question 17, in which respondents were asked to check the greatest influence on their attitude toward research in librarianship, we find this reinforced in that those who checked Ph.D. work and the next category, other graduate work, have noticeably higher attitude scores than the other categories. Similarly, those who checked conferences as the principal influence on their attitude had the lowest attitude score, those who checked MLS work had the next lowest, and those who checked library literature had the third lowest.

Unless we are misinterpreting the data badly, this leads us to the inference that conferences, master's level work in librarianship, and library literature are responsible for attitudes toward research that, though not negative, are very ambivalent and uncertain. And this, it would seem, tells us something important about the commitment of these three institutions to research or at least about their attitudes toward research. To put it more strongly perhaps than is justified, it appears that close work with research, as in a Ph.D. program, builds a strong and favorable attitude toward research and that library conferences, library education and library literature tend to undermine confidence in research.

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Table # _____

Greatest Influence on Attitude (Question 17)

| Category | N | Attitude Score |
|---|---|---|
| Ph.D. work | 27 | 47.2 |
| other grad work | 10 | 47.2 |
| colleagues | 22 | 44.9 |
| Pre-grad school | 11 | 44.0 |

| | N | Attitude Score |
|---|---|---|
| Checked nothing | 14 | 44.0 |
| Other literature | 8 | 43.3 |
| Literature in librarianship | 31 | 42.0 |
| MLS work | 22 | 41.0 |
| Conferences | 5 | 40.4 |

VI. Toward Interpretation--Is there a need for a Journal of Library Research?

Given the design limitations of this survey, the following are among the generalizations possible from the collected data.

respondents have a low opinion of library research as compared with research in other fields

library education/research is dominated by high proportions of university and college-based personnel

when reading or participating in non-library fields, respondents most often lean toward information science and education

library educators/researchers have been dollar poor so long that they expect to remain that way

the % of respondents who are more than 40 years old or who received their highest degree when more than 40 years old is much greater for LED members than for LRRT members

males and females are nearly all represented among LRRT respondents and among respondents who belong to LRRT and LED

the majority of respondents showed evidence of what might be termed "research appreciation"--an awareness of the elements and process of research and a willingness to believe in it when they see it

Other generalizations or conclusions are best left for the reader, who, it is hoped, will make good use of the framework provided by the other papers in this series.

There is nothing inherent in the survey technique which limits its use to evidence collection in support of an idea that someone already has. As in the present case, the questionnnaire survey is often used to probe a problem--that is, to estimate size, scope and range of possibilities. The researcher may, based on this preliminary data, redefine parameters and restate questions as hypotheses so that they can be tested.

With respect to the present survey, one restated question immediately comes to mind: is the need for library research greater or more urgent than the need for a journal of library research? The partial answer may well be that, given the present stage of development in librarianship, you can't have one without the other. A journal functions as a display case. By providing exposure for research needed or in progress it shifts responsibility for evaluation, interpretation, fund-seeking and institutional commitment to a much larger and, hopefully, more representative portion of the profession. For library research, to be mostly invisible has meant to be most suspect.

# APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN SURVEY

FOLLOW-UP LETTER

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY *The State University of New Jersey*

**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY SERVICE**
*Bureau of Information Sciences Research*
*189 College Avenue*
*New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903*
*Tel. 247-1766 Ext. 6969*

April 6, 1972

Dear Colleague:

About two weeks ago, I sent you a questionnaire designed to gather information about the opinions and practices of librarians who are interested in research. The data collected will be reported during the June 1972 ALA Convention as part of the session sponsored by the Library Research Round Table.

Early responses to the questionnaire have indicated that only about fifteen minutes are required to complete the form. Naturally I should like to have as many responses as possible in order to be able to reflect the widest range of opinions in the report. If you have not yet done so, I would appreciate your completing the questionnaire and returning it in the postage-paid return envelope that was included in the original mailing.

Thanks very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Ruth M. Katz

Ruth M. Katz
Principal Investigator

RMK/kmcg

# APPENDIX B

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 7

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 19

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 7

"Within a discipline or field, an individual may development an area of specialization--a content area about which he knows a great deal. If you have such areas of specialization, please list them in the order of your proficiency (by your own judgment). Limit the list to those areas in which you are currently active."

Given below are the specializations which each respondent rated as his "most proficient" area.

science information
school librarianship
(school) library unionism
book selection-education
management, public libraries
general humanities
school libraries
education research
cataloging-classification
cataloging
school librarianship
user studies
rare books
children's literature
literature
telecommunications
administration of educational media
statistical design
federal grants
av media
acquisitions
job motivation, environment
teaching
building design
library technical services
unionization
school media administration
library service to underprivileged
censorship/intellectual freedom
government publications
personnel management
classification and cataloging

management of intellectual enterprises
continuing education
library systems and automation
elementary school libraries
cataloging and classification
genealogy
administration
research methods in library science
reference
school librarianship
interpersonal
library automation
circulation control
theory in librarianship
SDI computer services
library automation
technical services
library buildings-especially lighting and fire protection
supervision of school libraries
evaluation of libraries
music bibliography
cataloging
library history
school learning centers
bibliographical control
automated information retrieval
developing questionnaires
political science
art
user studies
automated bibliographical control
library resources instruction
citation analysis
social work
academic libraries
library administration and organization
administration
archives-La Solette
education for librarianship
library research
library networks
evaluation of technical services
children's literature
international bibliographic control since UNESCO organized
learning styles
library education
media development
organization of knowledge
public library reference
children's literature
reference work
American literature

children's literature
library building planning
theology
administration
state libraries
association management
literature for children
selection and evaluation of materials
library automation
buildings and equipment
Indiana library and related laws
multi-media systems
science and technology literature
adult services
library-community relations
academic librarianship
adult services and reading materials
library catalog
reference and bibliography
religion (Christian)
operations, administration
bibliographic control
administration
library statistics and surveys
computer science
education administration
use of subject catalogs
descriptive cataloging school librarianship
government publications
medical librarianship
library in society
public library development
academic libraries
library automation
library science bibliography
school library media
library education
library administration
library education
state library administration
cataloging
library automation
public libraries
school libraries
school librarianship
cataloging
children's literature
library administration
bibliography
library use and instruction

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 19

As you know, any discussion about research is easily sidetracked by differing opinions of what research is or should be, considering your personal conception of research, can you briefly list the elements you consider essential to a definition of "research"?

Given below are portions quoted from the responses received. The order in which these quotes appear is random.

drawing of cogent inferences from the evidence in order to permit redefinition of the problem or to solve it in a generalized context

research should basically involve study of subjects, problems, situations which have not previously been analyzed in a logical, factual, consistent manner. Research=trail-blazing. In-house analysis of situations elsewhere studied provides data not previously held but it is not truly research. (this applies to non-historical methodologies only)

research does not necessarily have to include statistics

I think one of our major problems in library research is that we really don't agree upon any method or methods of systematic research to be valid as applied to library/information science problems and until we do agree or find some, all of our research is really open to question as to how to be interpreted

I feel that a complete research effort must contain an empirical element, a theoretical one, and implicitly contained in both, a philosophical element as well

allow for other kinds of research besides classic experimental-like field surveys-quasi-experimental--broaden scope of allowable types of research

inquiry into any given subject as exhaustive and critical and objective as possible, without evoking preconceived conclusion in order to discover why, how and sometimes where of the given subject

no insisting that the only acceptable method is the experimental approach. (I have the distinct feeling that some reseachers in our field feel that all acceptable research must copy the methods used in the physical sciences--resulting in some rather ludicrous studies)

collection of data; interpretation of data, including one or more of the following: suggested application of findings, solution of problem, augmentation of information directed toward solution of problem

a sense of humor, a large wastebasket, lots and lots of patience

to me, research means a critical and exhaustive inquiry of a problem or situation, with a gathering of facts and data, having as its aim the discovery of new facts. Correct interpretation of facts and data should also be the aim of the research--I feel librarians and the taxpayers are being short-changed by many of the "research projects" supported by ERIC-HEW.

research should seek to establish a solid foundation for action and planning for that action.

definition or awareness of a specific problem or area which could be solved or elucidated through investigation. Isolation of information relating to that problem-directly or by analogue-from which a solution may be derived. Presentation of hypothetical solutions for testing. Testing. Publication of results--**not** in vague generalities--but with supportive data presented precisely and descretely or workshop and discussion presentation

I would prefer a rather broad definition which would include both the discovery of new knowledge and the reorganization of existing knowledge in new ways

cluster studies employing longitudinal investigations, a broad support base, implementation and development of accurate tools for measurement and prediction.

what we lack most is theory as a basis for empirical studies, or rather **theory** as a basis for hypotheses to be tested by empirical studies. (and what holds up many librarians is an unfounded fear or lack of understanding of statistics)

a scientific, objective approach to problem solution

rigorous application of appropriate analysis to imaginatively derived questions

a research investigation should: define the problem clearly, devise a methodology appropriate to investigation of the problem, conduct the investigation rigorously, test the validity of the findings in the light of the study environment, formulate conclusions that follow from the findings, prepare a coherent report of the entire investigation

research in my opinion should be directed toward a goal that can be put to use in the short term, i.e. relevant to today's problems not the year 2000

many areas of social science research are relevant to the school librarian. Learning theory, reading, etc. are as relevant as library research. So much library research consists of descriptive studies and more should be done in basic research from which to build a strong base

emphasis to be on application rather than speculation, simplicity rather than complexity, consumer rather than producer

experimental or at least quasi-experimental conditions; quantifiable data; statistical analysis

either controlled conditions or a means for taking into account the bias from uncontrolled conditions

by experiment and reading, also consultation, establish and systematically marshall and record relevant facts and data in a specifically defined area or subject. Relate and measure findings to and against similar data of relevance. Present articulately and concisely the findings flowing from above two steps in such a way that they will clearly enlarge the knowledge of the area

there can be research in problem-solving, but the research needed in the lib field needs to be in the area of "pure" research. This situation is complicated by a lack of standards which might be the first phase of "pure" research

the difference between research and every day observation lies in the degree of effort to systematize that is applied and in the comprehensiveness of the effort

my personal view is that we need to do much more applied research that will produce demonstrable results. Problems of applying new knowledge, techniques, and approaches in operational library/information settings are as challenged if not more so than controlled studies of specially created data bases, interview/questionnaire studies and experimentation with new information technology.---large, expensive team-based research supported by massive government funding has also taken its toll on the quality and relevance of library research---when I think that the basic answer is well taught research in library school I am immediately reminded that most library faculty have little contact with the library in the university where they teach and haven't worked in a library in years---needed: a good essay on the politics of library research

the really first rate contributions in recent years have been relatively few and almost none have come from the massive infusion of federal funds under Title II-B---a few six-month fellowships for known competent researchers would advance the cause more than almost anything else

getting hung up on any one aspect of the process (i.e. methodology to be used) gives, in my estimation, the aura surrounding "research" whatever speciousness or reputation for being impractical it may have in the library field

I tend toward behavioral research methods for the research we need in library and information science---most of our good research is done by the same people who form a formidable clique---these cliques tie up the money that new talent could use for deserving proposals---we need timely publication of on-going research and we need to publish our failures---LRRT should provide a leadership role to other segments of ALA